

## PROSE AND VERSE - TWO RENDERINGS OF THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

### A COMPARISON OF TRANSLATIONS BY EDWARD HERON-ALLEN AND ARTHUR B. TALBOT

In 1859 two books were published which differed greatly in content and structure but which profoundly influenced the development of scientific and religious thought. The appearance of Charles Darwin's "On the Origin of Species" created an immediate furore and generated a vigorous discourse on the relationship between science and religion which continues to this day. By contrast, a translation by Edward Fitzgerald of selected quatrains of an obscure Persian poet attracted little attention at first, but gradually came to be accepted as a unique literary classic. Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam is not only the most famous translation of a poem in English but today compares with the Bible and the works of Shakespeare as a source of literary imagery. Omar's work, through Fitzgerald's translation, has also become a potent source of inspiration for theological debate, and the poet has become (probably not through his own intention) the flag bearer for many iconoclastic religious and philosophical forums. Darwin and Omar (through Fitzgerald) were both key players in the development of thought systems which redefined the role of God in the universe and encouraged man to honour his capacity for doubt.

Fitzgerald was neither the first nor the most scholarly translator of Omar's rubai. The strength of his work comes from his ability as a poet, his imaginative reconstruction of Omar's verse and the imposition of a narrative. Fitzgerald's Omar traces a path from an initial awakening, through stages of doubt, despair, self-indulgence, resignation and finally a sort of apotheosis. Later translators, who were more diligent scholars but lesser poets than Fitzgerald, such as Edward Whinfield, have provided much more extensive collections, which do contain some fine poetry, but which, lacking Fitzgerald's narrative drive, are anthologies rather than long poems. It is notable that many of these translators paid respect to Fitzgerald as a pioneer and innovator, and few were critical of the freedom with which he reconstructed Omar's verse.

Among these was Edward Heron-Allen (1861 –1943) polymath, writer, scientist and Persian scholar, whose prose translation of the Rubaiyat was published in 1898. The title page reads:

**THE RUBA'İYAT  
OF  
OMAR KHAYYAM**

**BEING  
A Facsimile of the Manuscript in the Bodleian Library at Oxford,  
with a Transcript into modern Persian Characters,**

**TRANSLATED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,  
AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY,  
BY  
EDWARD HERON-ALLEN**

This collection contains 158 quatrains. By contrast, Fitzgerald's first edition contains a mere 75, and his longest edition, the second, contains 110. In the introduction, Heron-Allen describes the purpose of his translation thus:

*It does not aim at being an edition of the Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam in general, but it is an attempt to place before English readers a literal translation of the oldest known MS. of the quatrains, and an exposition of the most important section of the material used by Fitzgerald in the construction of his poem.*

Later in the introduction Heron-Allen provides further details of his method of translation:

*As regards the actual translation of the quatrains, it has been my endeavour to give a literal rendering of the original line for line, either in the translation proper or in the accompanying notes, and in this I have been very greatly assisted by Mr. Barry Pain, who has gone through it with me and helped me to turn the intricate Persian construction of the lines into English, a task for which one is entirely unfitted after being steeped for two years in the involved phrasing of the original.*

Undoubtedly, the absence of versification does rob Omar's work of much of its suggestive power. However sonorous the language the effect is somewhat that of a sermon as opposed to an anthem, a discourse rather than a song. In 1908, Arthur B. Talbot addressed this insufficiency by producing a verse rendering of Heron-Allen's translation. Talbot was not the first to undertake such an exercise - in 1901 Charles G. Blanden published his *Omar Resung*, a versification of the copious prose translations of rubai by Justin

Huntly McCarthy. Apart from this singular publication, Talbot, who displays considerable poetic ability in this work, is shrouded in obscurity.

Here is Talbot's introduction to his translation, followed by a critical notice that appeared in the Times Literary Supplement.

**THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM**  
**From a Literal Prose Translation by Edward Heron-Allen**  
**Done into verse**  
**by**  
**Arthur B Talbot**

The history of Edward FitzGerald's magnum opus, The Ruba'iyát of Omar Khayyám, is too well known to need more than a brief recapitulation. The collection of quatrains - ruba'iyát - was first brought to his notice by Professor E. B. Cowell, lately Professor of Arabic and Sanskrit in the University of Cambridge, in the year 1855, when the earliest known manuscript of the ruba'iyát was discovered by the latter among the uncatalogued MSS. of the Ouseley Collection, in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. From a copy of this manuscript, made for him by Professor Cowell, FitzGerald translated, by means of a system of adaption little short of marvellous, this early record of Antinomian Persian philosophy, or ethics, into English quatrains, of the same metric construction as the originals.

The same manuscript, which was solely responsible for the first edition of FitzGerald's work, was reproduced in photographic facsimile, and literally translated into English prose, by Mr. Edward Heron-Allen, in the year 1898, with a view to showing how far FitzGerald's work was a correct rendering of the original, and how far an adaption.

It is now generally admitted that much of FitzGerald's beautiful poem was born of his own inventive genius, and is not to be found in the original. Nor does that admission detract from the merit of a work that has bestowed so many gems of thought and expression upon the English language, and earned for its author undying fame.

The Author of the present volume has cast Mr. Heron-Allen's literal prose translation into a metric form, also adhering to that of the original, and his aim has been to give as literal a rendering as possible. With what fidelity and what success that task has been accomplished, the Author must leave to the judgement of those readers whose interest in the matter may lead them to compare his work with the literal prose translation referred to.

The Author cannot close this brief note without thanking Mr. Heron-Allen for his great kindness in making many valuable suggestions, and in collating these quatrains with the original Persian.

A. B. T.  
LEICESTER, September, 1908



\*EXTRACTS\*  
FROM A COLUMN AND A HALF REVIEW OF THE ABOVE WORK  
(THEREIN REFERRED TO AS "THE REAL OMAR")

in

*"The Times" Literary Supplement* (29th October, 1908)

"He has set about producing a literal rendering in verse, based upon Mr. Heron-Allen's literal rendering in prose, and he has produced a translation, not only remarkable for fidelity, but of genuine poetical value. One has only to turn to a page or two to acknowledge one merit with gratitude, for it is one which few of the quatrain-spinners share - he is wholly bent on rendering Omar for Omar's sake, and never makes him a vehicle for his own moods and conceits. Here is a stanza in Mr Heron-Allen's prose and in Mr. Talbot's verse:-

*Of those who draw the pure date wine  
and those who spend the night in prayer,  
not one is on the dry land, all are in the water -  
One is awake; the others are asleep.*

*For those who from the date its vintage take,  
And they who all night long devotions make,  
All are submerg'd, not one remains on Earth,  
All are asleep; One only is awake.*

There can be no question of the fidelity of the translation of that stanza, and yet it has, particularly in the last line, the heightened meaning, the telling quality of genuine verse. Mr Talbot, then, has one characteristic which inspires confidence from the first; and one's confidence is enhanced by the discovery of how resolutely he has also set himself against FitzGerald's mesmerism in keeping to the spirit as well as the letter of the text."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Mr. Talbot has taken it simply as it came. His version opens, therefore, not with FitzGerald's magnificent *réveillé*, but in the deepest and most contrite mood which Omar attains:-

*Although I have not served Thee from my youth,  
And though my face is mask'd with Sin uncouth,  
In Thine Eternal Justice I confide,  
As one who ever sought to follow Truth.*

*Perchance within the tavern I may see  
The inmost secret of Thy Mystery,  
While at the Shrine in ignorance I bow;  
Burn me or bless me; I am part of Thee.*

These two opening verses in Mr. Talbot's version are, in point of fact, nearer paraphrase and further from literal translation than the greater part of his work; but they have just the strength and sincerity which seem to inspire the original, and they give the key to that side of Omar which FitzGerald most ignored, but which Mr. Talbot has rendered best."

\* \* \* \* \*

"It is curious, indeed, that through all the sudden changes of mood and manner which characterise the original the leading trait of the poet's mind is a certain sad lucidity, which never really deserts him, however much he may pretend to fuddle his wits with wine; and this quality is more impressive in the desultory arrangement of stanzas in the text, faithfully reproduced by Mr. Talbot, though of necessity ignored in our quotations, than in the cumulative eloquence of FitzGerald's argument."

\* \* \* \* \*

"That is, no doubt, no more than to say that, very wisely, he resists all temptations to draw the bow of Odysseus; but a result is that the general character of his verse is more faithful than FitzGerald's to the character of the original.

"Mr. Talbot does, however, in his own way often produce stanzas which one would find beautiful and wish to remember, even if one met them unattended, so to speak, and without references:-

*If thou could'st sit beside a rippling stream,  
With her of all thy thoughts the constant theme,  
Quaffing the Sunshine and the Wine of Morn,  
No call to prayer, methinks, would break thy dream,*

*Give me a scroll of verse, a little wine,  
With half a loaf to fill thy needs and mine,  
And with the desert sand our resting-place,  
For ne'er a Sultan's kingdom would we pine.*

It is something to have written that last stanza afresh after FitzGerald, and to have not absolutely failed. Mr. Talbot has, in fact, achieved a version of undoubted value to those who wish to know more of the real Omar and cannot read him in his own tongue."

\*\*\*\*\*

Here are the two translations, presented side by side.

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Perth, Western Australia



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**Heron-Allen**

1

If I have never threaded the pearl of Thy service,  
I have, at least, never wiped the dust of sin from my face;  
this being so, I am not hopeless of Thy mercy,  
for the reason that I have never said that One was Two.

2

If I tell Thee my secret thoughts in a tavern,  
it is better than if I make my devotions before the Mihrab without Thee.  
O Thou, the first and last of all created beings!  
burn me an Thou wilt, or cherish me an Thou wilt.

3

So far as in thee lies, reproach not drunkards,  
lay thou aside pretence and imposture;  
if, henceforth, thou desirest rest from this life of thine,  
do not for a moment shun humble folk.

4

So far as in thee lies, cause no pain to anyone,  
nor cause anyone to suffer from thy wrath;  
if thou hast a desire for eternal peace,  
fret thyself always and harass no one.

**Talbot**

1

Although I have not served thee from my youth,  
And though my face is masked with sin uncouth,  
In thine Eternal justice I Confide  
As One who ever sought to follow Truth.

2

Perchance within the Tavern I may see  
The inmost secret of Thy Mystery,  
While at the Shrine in ignorance I bow;  
Burn me or Bless me; I am part of Thee.

3

Blame not the sinner; hast thou Innocence?  
Lay thou aside imposture and pretence;  
If thou would henceforth live a restful life  
Give humble folk no reason for offence.

4

So rule thy life as ever to refrain  
From strife that to thy fellow bringeth pain;  
But scourge thyself, nor any mercy show,  
If the Eternal Peace thou would'st attain.



5

Since no one will guarantee thee a to-morrow,  
make thou happy now this love-sick heart of thine;  
drink wine in the moonlight, O Moon, for the moon  
shall seek us long and shall not find us.

6

The Qur'an, which men call the Supreme Word,  
they read at intervals but not continually,  
but on the lines upon the goblet a text is engraved  
which they read at all times and in all places.

7

We are; and the wine is, and the drinking bench; and our drunken bodies are;  
careless of hopes of mercy, and of fears of punishment;  
our souls, and our hearts, and our goblets,  
and our garments full of the lees of wine,  
independent of earth and air, and fire and water.

8

In this life it is best that thou shouldst make but few friends;  
distant intercourse with one's fellow men is good;  
that person upon whom thou leanest entirely,  
when thou examinest him closely, he is thine enemy.

5

O, Queen of night, for whom my spirit yearns,  
Drink of the wine of life while yet life burns!  
How know'st thou that thou art not the one  
To whom no moon or morrow e'er returns?

6

We dabble in the Qur'án now and then,  
Read, and repent, yet fall from Grace again;  
But in the goblet is engraved a text  
That greets eternally the eyes of men.

7

We are! Here is the wine! and here, close by,  
The ruin'd furnace in a heap doth lie;  
But when true inspiration we imbibe,  
The very Elements we may defy.

8

'Twere better that thou makest but few friends.  
Distance in intercourse to virtue tends;  
Examine him in whom thy trust is placed,  
He may be suing thee for treach'rous ends.

9

This jug was once a plaintive lover as I am,  
and was in pursuit of one of comely face;  
this handle that thou seest upon its neck  
is an arm that once lay around the neck of a friend.

10

Ah, woe to that heart in which there is no passion,  
which is not spell-bound by heart-cheering love!  
the day that thou spendest without love,  
there is no day more useless to thee than that day.

11

Today being the season of my youth,  
I desire wine, for thence comes my happiness;  
reproach me not, even though acrid it is pleasant;  
it is acrid only in that it represents my life.

12

Thou hast no power today over the morrow,  
and anxiety about the morrow is useless to thee;  
waste not thou this moment if thy heart be not mad,  
for the value of the remainder of this life is not manifest.

9

This jug, o'er which I pledge my love to-day,  
Was once a lover too, now sad, now gay;  
The handle that thou seest upon its neck  
Once round another's neck in friendship lay.

10

Ah! woeful is the heart from passion free,  
And sweet the pain of lovers' misery!  
If thou hast spent a day bereft of Love,  
For evermore that day is lost to thee.

11

To-day with Youth's effulgency I shine,  
And taste the Joy of Life in Youth's own Wine  
Sneer not because I find it bitter-sweet;  
There lies its likeness to this life of mine.

12

Tomorrow is beyond To-day's command,  
And Sorrow lords it o'er the future land;  
Thine hour is Now! Fix not thine eyes afar,  
Missing the Glory ready to thy hand!

13

Now that there is a possibility of happiness for the world,  
every living heart has yearnings towards the desert,  
upon every bough is the appearance of Moses' hand,  
in every breeze is the sigh of Jesus' breath.

14

For him for whom the fruit of the branch of truth has not grown,  
the reason is that he is not firm in the Road.  
Every one who has shaken with his hand the unstable bough of knowledge  
knows that today is like yesterday,  
and that tomorrow is like the First Day of Creation.

15

Already on the Day of Creation beyond the heavens my soul  
searched for the Tablet and Pen and for heaven and hell;  
at last the Teacher said to me with His enlightened judgment,  
"Tablet and Pen, and heaven and hell, are within thyself."

16

Arise and give me wine - what time is this for words?  
for to-night thy little mouth fills all my needs;  
give me wine, rose.coloured as thy cheeks,  
for this penitence of mine is as full of tangles as thy curls.

13

The world sighs out for Happiness, and saith  
"The very desert liveth: where is Death?"  
The hand of Moses blooms on many a bough,  
And every breeze is sweet with Jesus' breath.

14

Truth's branches bear good fruit for all who seek;  
They shake in vain who shake with hands too weak.  
To-day resembles Yesterday, but lo!  
Creation's voice shall in To-morrow speak.

15

This, in the Dawn of Being, my behest,  
My wand'ring soul for Heav'n and Hell made quest,  
For Pen and Tablet; 'til the Teacher said  
"Thou has them all, O Man, within thy breast!"

16

But bring me Wine; for words I do not care;  
I have thy lips, and all my Heav'n is there;  
Bring wine to match thy cheeks; my penitence  
Is full of tangles as thy clust'ring hair.

17

The spring breeze blows sweetly upon the face of the rose,  
in the shade of the garden plot a darling's face is sweet;  
nothing thou canst say of yesterday that is past, is sweet,  
be happy and do not speak of yesterday, for to-day is sweet.

18

How long shall I throw bricks upon the surface of the sea?  
I am disgusted with the idol-worshippers of the pagoda.  
Khayyam! who can say that he will be a denizen of hell,  
who ever went to hell, and who ever came from heaven?

19

The elements of a cup which he has made, to contain wine,  
a drinker will not permit to be scattered abroad;  
all these heads and delicate feet - with his finger.tips,  
for love of whom did he make them? - for hate of whom should he break them?

20

Like water in a great river and like wind in the desert,  
another day passes out of the period of my existence;  
grief has never lingered in my mind — concerning two days,  
the day that has not yet come and the day that is past.

17

The breath of Spring is sweet unto the Rose,  
The lov'd one's face in the dark garden grows;  
Speak not of Yesterday, - I know it not, -  
To-day is all thy wooing lover knows.

18

How long shall I throw pebbles on the sea?  
What are the Idol-worshippers to me?  
Who says "Khayyám is surely doomed to Hell?"  
Hast thou been there? Hath heaven rejected thee?

19

The Craftsman who hath made a cup so rare  
To hold his wine, will handle it with care.  
For love of whom, then, made He thee and me,  
For hate of whom to break and not to spare?

20

Like Wind or Water, passing on its way,  
Out of my life goes yet another day.  
Two days there are that never trouble me -  
One has not come, the other could not stay.

21

Seeing that my coming was not for me the Day of Creation,  
and that my undesired departure hence is a purpose fixed for me,  
get up and gird well thy loins, O nimble Cup bearer,  
for I will wash down the misery of the world in wine.

22

Khayyam, who stitched at the tents of wisdom,  
fell into the furnace of sorrow and was suddenly burnt;  
the shears of doom cut the tent.rope of his existence,  
and the broker of hope sold him for a mere song.

23

Khayyam, why mourn thus for thy sins?  
from grieving thus what advantage, more or less, dost thou gain?  
Mercy was never for him who sins not,  
mercy is granted for sins - why then grieve?

24

In cell, and college, and monastery, and synagogue  
are those who fear hell and those who seek after heaven;  
he who has knowledge of the secrets of God  
sows none of such seed in his heart of hearts.

21

I was not asked to choose my natal morn,  
I die as helplessly as I was born.  
Bring wine, and I will strive to wash away  
The recollection of Creation's scorn.

22

Khayyám, who stitch'd at Wisdom's golden tent,  
Through Sorrow's white-hot furnaces was sent;  
The tent-rope of his life by fate was cut,  
And for a song he from the Broker went.

23

Khayyám! for all thy sins pray do not deign  
To mourn; thy grief can earn thee naught but pain.  
Mercy was made for Sinners. Why then grieve?  
For they who sin not, Mercy may not gain.

24

In cell and cloister, mosque and synagogue,  
Are men whose steps the fear of Hell doth dog;  
But he who carries God within his breast  
Is independent of the Pedagogue.

25

If in the season of spring a being, houri.shaped,  
gives me on the green bank of a field a goblet full of wine,  
(though to everyone this saying may seem uncouth)  
a dog is better than I am if thenceforth I pronounce the name of heaven.

26

Know this - that from thy soul thou shalt be separated,  
thou shalt pass behind the curtain of the secrets of God.  
Be happy - thou knowest not whence thou hast come:  
drink wine - thou knowest not whither thou shalt go.

27

I fell asleep, and wisdom said to me: -  
" Never from sleep has the rose of happiness blossomed for anyone;  
why do a thing that is the mate of death?  
Drink wine, for thou must sleep for ages."

28

My heart said to me: - "I have a longing for inspired knowledge;  
teach me if thou art able."  
I said the Alif. My heart said: - " Say no more.  
If One is in the house, one letter is enough."

25

If in the Spring, she whom I love so well  
Meet me by some green bank - the truth I tell -  
Bringing my thirsty soul a cup of wine,  
I want no better Heaven, nor fear a Hell.

26

Know this, that soon thou diest, and thy soul  
The Book of God's Great Secret must unroll;  
Be happy! knowing not whence thou hast come,  
Nor whither thou shalt go. Drink out the Bowl!

27

Falling asleep, I heard my Fate confess  
That Sleep ne'er bore the Rose of Happiness.  
"Sleep is the Mate of Death," she cried. "Awake!  
Drink, ere Her lips bestow the last caress!"

28

Then inspiration from on High I sought,  
Asking that Knowledge might to me be brought;  
But presently my heart said, "Pray no more!  
The power of Prayer is all, the Prayer is naught!"

29

No one can pass behind the curtain that veils the secret,  
the mind of no one is cognizant of what is there ;  
save in the heart of earth we have no haven.  
Drink wine, for to such talk there is no end.

30

The mystery must be kept hidden from all the ignoble,  
and the secrets must be withheld from fools.  
Consider thine actions, towards thy fellow men:  
our hopes must be concealed from all mankind.

31

From the beginning was written what shall be;  
unhaltingly the Pen writes, and is heedless of good and bad;  
on the First Day He appointed everything that must be  
our grief and our efforts are vain.

32

In the spring, on the bank of the river and on the bank of the field,  
with a few companions and a playmate houri-shaped,  
bring forth the cup, for those that drink the morning draught  
are independent of the mosque and free from the synagogue.

29

Behind the veil the Gods their Secrets keep,  
And past that curtain none may hope to peep;  
One plot of earth is all we may secure.  
Drink, then! for such philosophies are cheap.

30

The Gods in mortal man do not confide,  
And Fate from fools her mysteries doth hide;  
Be thou but just towards thy fellow man,  
All hope or fear thou mayest put aside.

31

For He, to whom all future things are known,  
E'en as He made thee wrote thy record down;  
And what His pen hath written, good or ill,  
No strife may alter, and no grief atone.

32

If thou could'st sit beside a rippling stream,  
With her of all thy thoughts the constant theme,  
Quaffing the Sunshine and the Wine of Morn,  
No call to prayer, methinks, would break thy dream.

33

The heavenly vault is the girdle of my weary body,  
Jihun is a water.course worn by my filtered tears,  
hell is a spark from my useless worries,  
Paradise is a moment of time when I am tranquil.

34

They say that the garden of Eden is pleasant to the houris:  
I say that the juice of the grape is pleasant.  
Hold fast this cash and let that credit go,  
for the noise of drums, brother, is pleasant from afar.

35

Drink wine, for thou wilt sleep long beneath the clay  
without an intimate, a friend, a comrade, or wife;  
take care that thou tell'st not this hidden secret to anyone:  
The tulips that are withered will never bloom again.

36

Drink wine, for this is life eternal,  
this is thy gain from the days of thy youth;  
a season of roses, and wine, and drunken companions  
be happy for a moment for this is life!

33

Tired am I. The Firmament my belt;  
A mighty river are the tears I've spilt;  
Hell is a spark struck by my restless soul,  
And Heaven the joy my tranquil heart hath felt.

34

Men talk of Eden's Houris and their charms;  
To maids of Earth I drink and sing my psalms.  
Hold fast Life's cash; if Time be in thy debt  
How pleasant is the distant call to arms!

35

Drink Wine: for 'neath the clay in silent gloom  
Long shalt thou sleep, with none to share thy tomb;  
Reveal this hidden secret unto none -  
The wither'd tulip ne'er again will bloom.

36

Drink Wine: for here, and now, Eternal Life  
Gives all the gain that Youth may win from Strife;  
Roses and friends to share thy merriment:  
Seize now that Joy with which to-day is rife!



37

Give me wine which is a salve for my wounded heart,  
it is the boon companion of those who have trafficked in love;  
to my mind the dregs of a single draught are better  
than the vault of heaven which is the hollow of the world's skull.

38

I drink wine, and my enemies from left and right  
say : - " Do not drink wine, for it is the foe of religion."  
When I knew that wine was the foe of religion,  
I said: - " By Allah ! let me drink the foe's blood, for that is lawful."

39

Wine is a melted ruby and the cup is the mine thereof;  
the cup is a body and its wine is the soul thereof;  
that crystal cup that is bubbling over with wine  
is a tear in which the heart's blood is hidden.

40

I know not whether he who fashioned me  
appointed me to dwell in heaven or in dreadful hell,  
but some food, and an adored one, and wine, upon the green bank of a field  
all these three are cash to me : thine be the credit-heaven!

37

Give me red wine my broken heart to heal,  
Wine, the good friend of all that passion feel;  
I find more comfort in a single draught  
Than hollow Heaven bestows on those who kneel.

38

I drink, and spiteful folk attempt to show  
That Virtue no worse enemy could know;  
But if Religion stands in fear of wine,  
Then let me quaff the blood of such a foe!

39

Wine is a melted ruby, and the cup  
The mine from which we mortals dig it up;  
The cup the body, and the wine the soul:  
How many tears lie hidden where we sup?

40

Whether my destin'd fate shall be to dwell  
Midst Heaven's joys or in the fires of Hell  
I know not; here with Spring, and bread, and wine,  
And thee, my love, my heart says "All is well."

41

The good and the bad that are in man's nature,  
the happiness and misery that are predestined for us  
do not impute them to the heavens, for in the way of Wisdom  
those heavens are a thousandfold more helpless than thou art.

42

Whosoever has engrafted the leaf of love upon his heart,  
not one day of his life has been wasted;  
either he strives to meet with God's approbation,  
or he chooses bodily comfort and raises the wine-cup.

43

Everywhere that there has been a rose or tulip bed,  
there has been spilled the crimson blood of a king;  
every violet shoot that grows from the earth  
is a mole that was once upon the cheek of a beauty.

44

Be prudent, for the means of life are uncertain ;  
take heed, for the sword of destiny is keen.  
If fortune place almond sweets in thy very mouth,  
beware! swallow them not, for poison is mingled therein.

41

The joy or pain that Fate's decrees allow,  
The good or ill inscribed upon Man's brow;  
Impute them not unto the Heavens above,  
For heaven is ruled by Fate as much as thou.

42

If in thy heart the seed of Love is plac'd,  
No day of all thy life can run to waste;  
Whether for God's approval thou dost strive,  
Or on the joys of Earth hast set thy taste.

43

Where'er the Rose or Tulip scents the air,  
The life-blood of a King has ebb'd forth there;  
And every Violet that decks the Earth  
Was once a mole upon a cheek so fair.

44

Be wise: thou canst not see what Fate portends;  
Be arm'd against the sharpened sword she sends;  
Feast not upon the sweets she offers thee,  
For poison with the sugar oft she blends.

45

One jar of wine and a lover's lips, on the bank of the sown field -  
these have robbed me of cash, and thee of the credit.  
The whole human race is pledged to heaven or hell,  
but who ever went to hell, and who ever came from heaven?

46

O thou, whose cheek is moulded upon the model of the wild rose,  
whose face is cast in the mould of Chinese idols,  
yesterday thy amorous glance gave to the Shah of Babylon  
the moves of the Knight, the Castle, the Bishop, the Pawn, and the Queen.

47

Since life passes ; what is Baghdad and what is Balkh?  
When the cup is full, what matter if it be sweet or bitter?  
Drink wine, for often, after thee and me, this moon  
will pass on from the last day of the month to the first,  
and from the first to the last.

48

Of those who draw the pure date wine  
and those who spend the night in prayer,  
not one is on the dry land, all are in the water.  
One is awake : the others are asleep.

45

My empty purse on wine must cast the blame:  
My kisses, love, have robbed thee of thy fame;  
Some pledge themselves to faith in Heav'n or Hell:  
But who hath been to Hell? From Heav'n who came?

46

O thou, whose cheek is modell'd like the Rose,  
No brighter eye far Cathay's idol shows;  
Thy glance hath taught the Shah of Babylon  
Each move that Life's eventful chessboard knows.

47

Who cares for Balkh or Baghdad? Life is fleet;  
And what though bitter be the cup, or sweet,  
So it be full? This moon, when we are gone,  
The circling months will day by day repeat.

48

For, those who from the date its vintage take,  
And they who all night long devotions make,  
All are submerg'd, not one remains on Earth,  
All are asleep: One only is awake.

49

This intellect that haunts the path of happiness  
keeps saying to thee a hundred times a day :  
"Understand in this single moment of thine existence, that thou art not  
like those herbs which when they gather them spring up again."

50

Those who are the slaves of intellect and hair-splitting,  
have perished in bickerings about existence and non-existence;  
go, thou ignorant one, and choose rather grape-juice,  
for the ignorant from eating dry raisins have become like unripe grapes  
themselves.

51

My coming was of no profit to the heavenly sphere,  
and by my departure naught will be added to its beauty and dignity;  
neither from anyone have my two ears heard  
what is the object of this my coming and going.

52

We must be effaced in the way of love,  
we must be destroyed in the talons of destiny;  
O sweet-faced Cup bearer, sit thou not idle,  
give to me water, for dust I must become.

49

The voice that haunts thy peace, within thy brain  
A hundred times a day sings this refrain:-  
"Thou livest but a moment, and art not  
Like herbs which, gathered once, spring up again."

50

The Slaves of Intellect in talk persist;  
Die, arguing does this or that exist;  
Fools eat dry raisins 'til their souls become  
Sour grapes; but wise men on New Wine insist.

51

The Universe gained nothing from my birth,  
Nor will my going cause it any dearth  
Of dignity or beauty. None can say  
Why I should come to, or why leave, the Earth.

52

To Love's effacement this our life we trust,  
And into Fate's strong talons we are thrust;  
Then rouse thyself, O sweet-faced Cupbearer,  
Bring me a draught, for long shall I be dust!

53

Now that nothing but the mere name of our happiness remains,  
the only old friend that remains is new wine;  
withhold not the merry hand from the wine.cup  
to-day that nothing but the cup remains within our reach.

54

What the Pen has written never changes,  
and grieving only results in deep affliction;  
even though, all thy life, thou sufferest anguish,  
not one drop becomes increased beyond what it is.

55

heart, for a while seek not the company of the frail ones;  
cease for a while to be engrossed with the commerce of love.  
Frequent the thresholds of the darvlshes  
perhaps thou mayest be accepted for awhile by the accepted people.

56

Those who adorn the Heavens for a fragment of time,  
come, and go, and come again as time goes on;  
in the skirt of Heaven, and in the pocket of earth,  
are creatures who, while God dies not, will yet be born.

53

Our happiness is but an empty sign:  
One old and faithful friend we have - New Wine;  
Stretch out the merry hand unto the cup,  
'Tis all the Good within thy reach or mine!

54

Whate'er the Pen hath written stands for aye:  
Afflictions's sword the grieving heart will slay;  
Though all thy life with anguish thou art wrung,  
The forward march of Fate thou canst not stay.

55

O Heart! Seek not the frail ones for awhile,  
And cease with Love existence to beguile!  
Frequent the house of them that beg and pray,  
Perchance on thee such holy ones may smile.

56

The stars that yon great firmament adorn  
Have birth and death, and yet again are born  
And in the skirt of Heaven, the womb of Earth,  
Are they whom God will yet bring to the morn.

57

Those whose beliefs are founded upon hypocrisy,  
come and draw a distinction between the body and the soul;  
I will put the wine jar on my head, if, when I have done so,  
they place a comb upon my head, as if I were a cock.

58

The bodies which people this heavenly vault,  
puzzled the learned.  
Beware lest thou lovest the end of the string of wisdom,  
for even the controllers themselves become giddy.

59

I am not the man to dread my non-existence,  
for that half seems pleasanter to me than this half;  
this is a life which God has lent me,  
I will surrender it when the time of surrender comes.

60

This caravan of life passes by mysteriously;  
mayest thou seize the moment that passes happily!  
Cup bearer, why grieve about the tomorrow of thy patrons?  
give us a cup of wine, for the night wanes.

57

The hypocrites who make Belief a law,  
'Twixt Soul and Body nice distinctions draw;  
But I would still maintain my faith in Wine,  
Though in the goblet Death himself I saw.

58

The circling planets, that in space abound,  
The brains of our most learned ones confound;  
Hold fast the Cord, for they that make thee spin,  
Themselves with giddiness will turn around!

59

I do not dread Extinction: far more bliss  
Lies in that half of Time than lives in this;  
This life was lent by God, and unto Him  
I will surrender what I shall not miss.

60

Life's caravan mysteriously goes by;  
Seize Happiness, while yet the moments fly!  
Do not, Cupbearer, for tomorrow grieve,  
Bring Wine to-night, e'er Dawn lights up the sky!

61

Being old, my love for thee led my head into a snare;  
if not, how comes it that my hand holds the cup of date-wine?  
My sweetheart has destroyed the penitence born of reason,  
and the passing seasons have torn the garment that patience sewed.

62

Although wine has rent my veil,  
so long as I have a soul I will not be separated from wine;  
I am in perplexity concerning vintners, for  
what will they buy that is better than what they sell?

63

So much generosity and kindness at the beginning, why was it?  
and that maintenance of me with delights and blandishments, why was it?  
Now Thine only endeavour is to afflict my heart;  
after all, what wrong have I done - once more, why was it?

64

In my mind may there be desire for idols houri.like,  
in my hand may there be, all the year round, the juice of the grape;  
they say to me, " May God give thee repentance!  
"He himself will not give it; I will none of it; let it be far off!

61

Though old, with love for thee I am forlorn,  
Or else the wine thou bringest I would scorn;  
Thou hast destroy'd my early penitence:  
The garment Patience sewed the Years have torn.

62

My veil of Temperance by wine is rent,  
But still with wine my soul shall be content;  
How can the vintners purchase better goods  
Than those which to the market they have sent?

63

Why wert Thou once so loving, and didst try  
My soul, with softest blandishments, to buy?  
To-day Thou sendest naught but dismal woe;  
How have I sinn'd Once more I ask Thee, why?

64

My soul to Love for ever I commit:  
My body from the Grape shall never flit;  
They say, "May God repentance give thee soon;"  
He gives it not, so I will none of it.

65

In the tavern thou canst not perform the Ablution save with wine,  
and thou canst not purify a tarnished reputation;  
be happy, for this veil of temperance of ours  
is so torn that it cannot be repaired.

66

I saw upon the terrace of a house a man, alone,  
who trampled upon the clay, holding it in contempt;  
that clay said to him in mystic language :  
"Be still, for like me thou wilt be much trampled upon."

67

It is a pleasant day, and the weather is neither hot nor cold;  
the rain has washed the dust from the faces of the roses;  
the nightingale in the Pehlevi tongue to the yellow rose  
cries ever : - "Thou must drink wine!"

68

Ere that fate makes assault upon thy head,  
give orders that they bring thee rose.coloured wine;  
thou art not treasure, O heedless dunce, that thee  
they hide in the earth and then dig up again.

65

Ablution in the tavern needs much wine;  
The tarnish'd reputation ne'er will shine;  
Be happy! for our veil of Temperance  
Is torn beyond repair. Why then repine?

66

I was, upon the terrace, one who trod  
In blind contempt upon the beaten sod.  
The bruised clay in mystic language spake -  
"Thou, too, shalt some day feel the Foot of God!"

67

The day is fair, and free from cold or heat,  
And rain hath wash'd the dust from roses sweet;  
The nightingale cries in the Ancient Tongue -  
"Drink, pallid rose, and blush at Love's pulse-beat!"

68

E'er thou art stricken down by Fate above,  
Drink wine, the rosy wine that speaks of Love!  
Thy body hath no value; from the grave  
No man will dig thee up for treasure trove!



69

Take heed to stay me with the wine-cup,  
and make this amber face like a ruby;  
when I die, wash me with wine,  
and out of the wood of the vine make the planks of my coffin.

70

O Shah! thy destiny appointed thee to sovereignty,  
and saddled for thee the horse of empire;  
when thy golden.hoofed charger moved,  
setting foot upon the clay, the earth became gilded.

71

A love that is insincere has no value;  
like a fire half.dead, it gives no heat.  
A true lover, throughout the month, and year, and night, and day,  
takes neither rest, nor peace, nor food, nor sleep.

72

No one has solved the tangled secrets of eternity,  
no one has set foot beyond the orbit,  
since, so far as I can see, from tyro to teacher,  
impotent are the hands of all men born of woman.

69

With wine my bodily defects make good:  
Tincture my amber visage with its blood;  
With rosy wine my last ablutions make,  
And build my coffin of the Vine's sweet wood.

70

O Shah! thy brows were crown'd by Destiny,  
That saddl'd thine imperial steed for thee;  
And where thy charger plants his golden hoof  
Thine abject slaves a gilded footprint see.

71

Imaginary Love, a vain conceit,  
Like to a fire half-dead, gives little heat.  
A lover true with constant fervour burns,  
To him nor peace, nor food, nor sleep, is sweet.

72

The tangled secrets of Eternity  
Remain unsolv'd; and Time and Space are free  
From Man's control; both ignorant and wise  
Stand impotent before Infinity.

73

Set limits to thy desire for worldly things and live content,  
sever the bonds of thy dependence upon the good and bad of life,  
take wine in hand and play with the curls of a loved one; for quickly  
all passeth away - and how many of these days remain?

74

The heavens rain down blossoms from the clouds,  
thou mayest say that they shed blossoms into the garden ;  
in a lily-like cup I pour rosy wine,  
as the violet clouds pour down jessamine.

75

I drink wine, and every one drinks who like me is worthy of it;  
my wine-drinking is but a small thing to Him ;  
God knew, on the Day of Creation, that I should drink wine;  
if I do not drink wine, God's knowledge was ignorance.

76

Do not allow sorrow to embrace thee,  
nor an idle grief to occupy thy days;  
forsake not the book, and the lover's lips, and the green bank of the field,  
ere that the earth enfold thee in its bosom.

73

Restrain thy worldly tastes, and live content,  
Careless alike of Good and Evil sent;  
Take wine and kisses, ere it be too late,  
For few such days remain to thee unspent.

74

The Heavens rain down their benefits divine,  
Their blossom-gifts in every garden shine;  
I pour red wine into this lily-cup,  
As purple clouds pour down sweet jessamine.

75

For wine, good men athirst will always pant  
But to such trifles God no thought will grant;  
He knew, before He made me, I should drink:  
And, if I drink not, was He ignorant?

76

Let not the Veil of Sorrow shroud thy face,  
Nor in thy life let idle grief find place;  
But feast on books, and love, and Nature's joys,  
Ere Earth enfold thee in her last embrace.

77

Drink wine, that will banish thy abundant woes,  
and will banish thought of the Seventy-two Sects;  
avoid not the alchemist, for, from him,  
thou takest one draught, and he banishes a thousand calamities.

78

Even though wine is forbidden, for all that it depends upon who drinks it,  
and then in what quantity, and also with whom he drinks it;  
these three conditions being as they should be ; say!  
who drinks wine if a wise man does not do so?

79

Drink wine, for thy body becomes atoms in the earth,  
thine earth, after that, becomes goblets and jars;  
be thou heedless of hell and heaven,  
why should a wise man be deceived about such things?

80

Now is the time when by the spring.breezes the world is adorned,  
and in hope of rain it opens its eyes,  
the hands of Moses appear like froth upon the bough,  
the breath of Jesus comes forth from the earth.

77

Drink Wine, that heals all woes, and thou shalt yet  
The seventy-two contentious sects forget;  
Shun not that Alchemist, who in the Cup  
A draught to cure a thousand ills hath set.

78

Is wine an evil? Tell me first who drinks,  
How much he thirsts, with whom his glass he clinks?  
If these conditions three be meetly fill'd,  
No son of Wisdom from the grape-juice shrinks.

79

Drink Wine, for thou shalt be resolv'd in Earth,  
And, as a goblet, shalt find second birth;  
Heedless be thou of Heav'n and Hell alike;  
Be not deceiv'd! Hold fast to Wine and Mirth!

80

The sweet Spring-breezes now the world adorn,  
In hope of rain its eyes salute the morn;  
The hands of Moses whiten many a spray,  
The breath of Jesus moves the thrusting corn.

81

Every draught that the Cup bearer scatters upon the earth  
quenches the fire of anguish in some afflicted eye.  
Praise be to God ! thou realize that wine  
is a juice that frees thy heart from a hundred pains.

82

Every morning the dew bedecks the faces of the tulips,  
the crests of the violets in the garden are bent downwards;  
verily, most pleasing to me is the rosebud  
which gathers its skirts close around itself.

83

Friends, when ye hold a meeting together,  
it behoves ye warmly to remember your friend;  
when ye drink wholesome wine together,  
and my turn comes, turn a goblet upside down.

84

Friends, when with consent ye make a tryst together,  
and take delight in one another's charms,  
when the Cup bearer takes round in his hand the Mugh wine,  
remember a certain helpless one in your benediction.

81

Lo! every drop the cupbearer shall spill,  
The fire of anguish in some eye may still;  
Praise be to God! Thou knowest that in Wine  
Is that which frees thy heart from every ill.

82

Each morn the dew begems the tulip's face,  
The violet's bended crest is full of grace;  
But, fairest of them all, the rosebud sweet,  
With modest blush her skirt doth closely lace.

83

Friends, when ye meet together, ne'er forget;  
The one, whom o'er the cup ye oft have met;  
And, when ye drink a draught of wholesome wine,  
At my turn, upside down a goblet set!

84

Friends, when ye keep a tryst, and meet your host,  
And merrymake with those ye love the most,  
When the Mugh Wine the cupbearer takes round,  
Drink to a certain Helpless One a toast!

85

One cup of wine is worth a hundred hearts and religions,  
one draught of wine is worth the empire of China,  
saving ruby wine there is not, on the face of earth,  
any acrid thing that is worth a thousand sweet souls.

86

If thou desirest Him, be separated from wife and children,  
bravely move thine abode from thy relations and friends;  
whatever is, is an hindrance on the road for thee,  
how canst thou journey with these hindrances? - remove them!

87

Bring me that ruby in a clear glass,  
bring me that companion and intimate of all excellent people:  
since thou knowest that the duration of this earthly world  
is a wind that quickly passes by, - bring me wine.

88

Arise ! bring physic to this oppressed heart,  
bring that musk.scented and rose.coloured wine;  
if thou desirest the elements of sorrow's antidote,  
bring ruby wine and the silk stringed lute.

85

One draught outweighs a hundred hearts and creeds,  
And he who drinks no Eastern Empire needs;  
Save ruby wine, there is not on the Earth  
One bitter thing that so much sweetness breeds.

86

If thou desirest Him, put all from thee:  
No earthly love must in thy bosom be;  
Whatever is, will hinder thine advance:  
How canst thou fare thus burden'd? Be thou free!

87

Bring me that Ruby in its crystal mine:  
Bring me the friend that good men call divine.  
Thou knowest that this temporary world  
Is but a passing zephyr. Bring me Wine!

88

Bring physic to this heart with sorrow drear,  
Bring wine, musk-scented, rosy-tinted, clear.  
Dost thou not know of Sorrow's antidote?  
Wine to thy lips, and Music to thine ear.

89

I saw a potter in the bazaar yesterday,  
he was violently pounding the fresh clay,  
and that clay said to him, in mystic language,  
"I was once like thee - so treat me well."

90

Drink of that wine that is eternal life,  
it is the stock.in.trade of youthful pleasure, drink!  
it burns like fire, but sorrows  
it makes like the water of life - drink!

91

Follow not the Traditions, and leave alone the Commands,  
withhold not from anyone the morsel that thou possessest:  
neither slander, nor afflict the heart of anyone,  
I guarantee you the world beyond - bring wine!

92

Wine is rose.red, and the cup is filled with the water of roses, - maybe,  
in the crystal casket is a pure ruby, - maybe,  
a melted ruby is in the water, - maybe,  
moonlight is the veil of the sun, - maybe.

89

In the Bazaar I saw, but yesterday,  
A potter rudely pounding the fresh clay;  
The clay in mystic language made complaint -  
"I too was once like thee: thy hand then stay!"

90

Drink of that Wine which is Eternal Life!  
With its Sunshine the joys of youth are rife:  
Like fire it burns, but ah! what happiness  
It bears to hearts that break in Sorrow's strife!

91

Scout the Traditions: bid the Law begone:  
The morsel that thou hast withhold from none:  
By word nor deed afflict a single heart:  
I'll guarantee thee future worlds. Drink on!

92

Wine is rose-red, perchance the Rose's tears  
Lie in the cup, or it a ruby bears:  
A ruby melted in her essence sweet,  
As moonlight melting when the Sun appears.

93

Every vow we make, we break again,  
we shut once more upon ourselves the door of fame and fair repute;  
blame me not if I act as a fool,  
for once more am I drunken with the wine of love.

94

To speak plain language, and not in parables,  
we are the pieces and heaven plays the game,  
we are played together in a baby game upon the chessboard of existence,  
and one by one we return to the box of non-existence.

95

Oh, heart ! since in this world truth itself is hyperbole,  
why art thou so disquieted with this trouble and abasement?  
resign thy body to destiny, and adapt thyself to the times,  
for, what the Pen has written, it will not re-write for thy sake.

96

On the face of the rose there is still a cloud-shadow,  
in my nature and heart there is still a desire for wine;  
sleep not, what right hast thou to sleep yet?  
give me wine, sweetheart, for it is still daylight.

93

We break each vow: upon ourselves once more  
Of fame and fair repute we shut the door;  
Reproach me not with folly, for, in truth,  
The Wine of Love hath caught me, as of yore.

94

To speak plain language, parable to shame,  
We are the pieces, Heaven plays the game:  
A childish game upon the board of Life,  
Then back into the Box from whence we came.

95

O heart! truth absolute thou canst not see,  
Then why abase thyself in misery?  
Bow down to Fate, and wrestle not with Time!  
The pen will not rewrite one word for thee.

96

But still the Rose's face the shadows fret,  
Still doth my heart the wine-desire beget;  
Sleep not, my love, it is not time to sleep,  
But bring me wine, for daylight lingers yet!

97

Go! throw dust upon the face of the heavens,  
drink wine, and consort with the fair of face;  
what time is this for worship ? and what time is this for supplication?  
since, of all those that have departed, not one has returned?

98

Fill the cup! for the day breaks white like snow,  
learn colour from the wine that is ruby;  
take two fragrant aloe logs, and brighten the assembly,  
make one into a lute, and burn the other.

99

We have returned to our wonted debauch,  
we have renounced — the Five Prayers!  
wherever the goblet is, there thou mayst see us,  
our necks stretched out like that of the bottle.

100

In great desire I pressed my lips to the lip of the jar,  
to enquire from it how long life might be attained;  
it joined its lip to mine and whispered:  
" Drink wine, for, to this world, thou returnest not."

97

Fling dust at heaven, that every offering spurns;  
Drink wine, and love while thy desire yet burns;  
What time is this to worship or to pray?  
Of all that have departed, none returns.

98

Fill up the cup! the day breaks white like snow;  
Learn colour from the Wine's deep ruby glow;  
Two fragrant aloe-logs will cheer us all;  
Make this a lute, that on the embers throw.

99

Our old debauch we come not to revive,  
Again we have renounc'd the Pray'r-times five;  
Where'er the goblet is, there shall we be,  
Our necks extended, each a flask alive.

100

To the jar's mouth my eager lip I press'd,  
For Life's Elixir making anxious quest;  
It join'd its lip to mine, and whisper'd low -  
"Drink wine: thou shalt not wake from thy last rest!"



101

I will give thee counsel if thou wilt give ear to me,  
for the sake of God do not wear the garment of hypocrisy,  
the hereafter will fill all hours, and the world is but a moment,  
do not sell the kingdom of eternity for the sake of one moment.

102.

Khayyam, if thou art drunk with wine, be happy,  
if thou reposest with one tulip-cheeked, be happy,  
since the end of all things is that thou wilt be naught;  
whilst thou art, imagine that thou art not, — be happy!

103

I went last night into the workshop of a potter,  
I saw two thousand pots, some speaking, and some silent;  
suddenly one of the pots cried out aggressively:  
"Where are the pot maker, and the pot buyer, and the pot seller?"

104

Of this spirit, that they call pure wine, they say : -  
" It is a remedy for a ruined heart";  
set quickly before me two or three heavily filled cups,  
why do they call a good water "wicked water"?

101

Here is good counsel, give thine ear to me,  
Wear not the garment of hypocrisy;  
The Future is unending, Life is short,  
Sell not for it the whole Eternity.

102

Khayyám, though drunk, lift up thy cheerful voice,  
Be happy with the darling of thy choice;  
If in the end of things thou must be naught,  
Imagine thou art nothing now. Rejoice!

103

Within the potter's shop, ere this day broke,  
I saw a host of pots - some mute, some spoke;  
And suddenly one pot, aggressive, cried,  
"Who makes, or buys, or sells, us earthen folk?"

104

Of this good spirit, that men call Pure Wine,  
They say, "Twill heal that broken heart of thine."  
Haste then, and bring me three o'erbrimming cups,  
Impute no evil to a gift divine.

105

Regard my virtues one by one, and forgive my crimes ten by ten,  
pardon every crime that is past, its reckoning is with God!  
let not the wind and air fan the flame of thy rancour,  
by Muhammad's tomb! forgive me.

106

Verily wine in the goblet is a delicate spirit,  
in the body of the jar, a delicate soul reposes,  
nothing heavy is worthy to be the friend of wine  
save the wine.cup, for that is, at the same time, heavy and delicate.

107

Where is the limit to eternity to come, and where to eternity past?  
now is the time of joy, there is no substitute for wine:  
both theory and practice have passed beyond my ken,  
but wine unties the knot of every difficulty.

108

This vault of heaven, beneath which we stand bewildered,  
we know to be a sort of magic.lantern :  
know thou that the sun is the lamp.flame and the universe is the lamp,  
we are like figures that revolve in it.

105

Regard my virtues singly, bid them live,  
But pass my crimes, by tens, through Memory's sieve;  
Bear not resentment, God must be the judge;  
By great Muhammad's Tomb, I say, "Forgive!"

106

Wine in the goblet is a spirit rare,  
Within the jar a tender soul is there;  
No earthly thing may be the friend of wine  
Except the cup, which, though of clay, is fair.

107

Where doth the past begin, the future end?  
Rejoice to-day, Wine is thy only friend!  
Nor theory nor practice is of use,  
But Wine unties each knot that Fate may send.

108

This vault of Heaven, 'neath which like fools we sit,  
Is but a magic-lantern, dimly lit:  
The sun the flame, the Universe the lamp,  
We are the figures that revolve in it.

109

I do not always prevail over my nature, but what can I do?  
and I suffer for my actions, but what can I do?  
I verily believe that Thou wilt generously pardon me  
on account of my shame that Thou hast seen what I have  
done, but what can I do?

110

Let me arise and seek pure wine,  
make thou the colour of my cheek like that of the jujube fruit,  
as for this meddling intellect, a fist.full of wine  
will I throw in its face, to make it sleep.

111

How long shall we continue slaves to every.day problems?  
what matter whether we live one year, or one day, in this world?  
pour out a cup of wine, before that we  
become pots in the workshop of the potters.

112

Since our abode in this monastery is not permanent  
without the Cup bearer and the beloved, it is painful to support life;  
how long of ancient creeds or new, O philosopher?  
when I have left it what matter if the world be old or new?

109

I do not always o'er the flesh prevail,  
I suffer for the sin: must I bewail?  
Upon Thy generous pardon I rely,  
Because I grieve that Thou should'st see me frail.

110

Let me arise, and in pure wine drink deep,  
And bid my cheeks their ripe-fruit colour keep  
Then will I throw in meddling Reason's face  
Sufficient wine to make her fall asleep.

111

How long shall we be slaves, untying knots?  
Who cares if Fate long life, or short, allots?  
Pour out a cup of wine, before we all  
Become, within the workshop, earthen pots.

112

Since our abode in this world is so short,  
Sans Wine and Love this Life were sorry sport.  
Creeds, old or new, how long will ye discuss?  
Shall I, when dead, bestow on Time a thought?

113

In loving Thee I incur reproaches for a hundred sins,  
and if I fail in this obligation I pay a penalty :  
if my life remain faithful to Thy cruelty,  
please God, I shall have less than that to bear till the Judgment Day.

114

The world being fleeting, I practise naught but artifice,  
I hold only with cheerfulness and sparkling wine;  
they say to me : - "May God grant thee penitence."  
He himself does not give it, and if He gives it, I will none of it.

115

Although I have come with an air of supplication to the mosque,  
by Allah ! I have not come to pray;  
I came one day and stole a prayer.mat  
that sin wears out, and I come again and again.

116

When I am abased beneath the foot of destiny  
and am rooted up from the hope of life,  
take heed that thou makest nothing but a goblet of my clay,  
haply when it is full of wine I may revive.

113

A hundred sins there are in loving Thee,  
Loving Thee not incurs grave penalty.  
If I keep lifelong faith unto thy Scourge,  
Give me the credit when Thou judgest me!

114

I am all artifice. Since Time is swift,  
In joy and wine I see no need for thrift;  
They say, "May God to thee grant penitence."  
He gives it not, nor would I take the gift.

115

Though to the Mosque I come with pious air,  
By Allah! think not I have come for prayer;  
I stole a mat once from a worshipper -  
That sin worn out, again I here repair.

116

When Fate hath traml'd me beneath her feet,  
And torn me from the hope of Life so sweet,  
Make nothing but a goblet of my clay;  
When full of wine my heart once more may beat.

117

My heart does not distinguish between the bait and the trap,  
  
one counsel urges it towards the mosque, another towards the cup;  
nevertheless the wine.cup, and the loved one, and I continually together,  
are better, cooked, in a tavern, than raw, in a monastery.

118

It is morning: let us for a moment inhale rose.coloured wine,  
and shatter against a stone this vessel of reputation and honour;  
let us cease to strive after what has long been our hope,  
and play with long ringlets and the handle of the lute.

119

We have preferred a corner and two loaves to the world,  
and we have put away greed of its estate and magnificence;  
we have bought poverty with our heart and soul  
in poverty we have discerned great riches.

120

I know the outwardness of existence and of non.existence,  
I know the inwardness of all that is high and low;  
nevertheless let me be modest about my own knowledge  
if I recognise any degree higher than drunkenness.

117

I know not which the bait, or which the snare  
"Twixt Mosque and Cup I'm drawn, now here, now  
there;  
And yet the Cup, my Darling One, and I,  
Are better ripe in wine, than green in prayer.

118

"Tis morn! The breath of wine let us inhale;  
Break on a stone this cup of honour frail!  
Let us cease striving for our Ancient Hope,  
That lute and love may yet our hearts regale.

119

We chose dry bread and privacy, before  
The luxury that wealth may have in store.  
We have bought poverty with heart and soul,  
And poverty hath but enrich'd us more.

120

I know, though outwardly, of Life and Death;  
And, inwardly, of all above, beneath;  
But let me boast not, for I nothing know  
Beyond the inspiration of Wine's breath.

121

For a while, when young, we frequented a teacher,  
for a while we were contented with our proficiency;  
behold the foundation of the discourse: — what happened to us?  
we came in like water and we depart like wind.

122

To him who understands the mysteries of the world,  
the joy and sorrow of the world is all the same;  
since the good and the bad of the world will come to an end;  
what matter, since it must end ? an thou wilt, be all pain, or,  
an thou wilt, all remedy.

123

So far as in thee lies, follow the example of the profligate,  
destroy the foundations of prayer and fasting:  
hear thou the Word of Truth from Omar Khayyam,  
"Drink wine, rob on the highway, and be benevolent."

124

Since the harvest for the human race, in this wilderness,  
is naught but to suffer affliction or to give up the ghost,  
light-hearted is he who passes quickly from this world,  
and he who never came into the world is at rest.

121

A teacher once we sought, when young, to find  
Wisdom that for a while contents the mind;  
And from the whole discourse what did we learn? -  
We come like water and depart like wind.

122

To him who understands Life's mystery,  
Its joy or sorrow all the same must be;  
Since good and ill alike must end, who cares  
Whether it be all pain or remedy?

123

So far as in thee lies, feast evermore,  
And cast both prayer and fasting from thy door.  
From Omar Khayyám hear the word of truth, -  
"Rob on the road, and drink - but feed the poor."

124

This world one choice alone for men hath blest,  
'Tis either Death, or Life by pain opprest;  
How happy he to whom Death quickly comes,  
And he who ne'er is born hath perfect rest.

125

Darvish! rend from thy body the figured veil,  
rather than sacrifice thy body for the sake of that veil;  
go and throw upon thy shoulders the old rug of poverty  
beneath that rug thou art equal to a sultan.

126

Behold the evil conduct of this vault of heaven,  
behold the world — empty by the passing away of friends;  
as far as thou art able live for thyself for one moment,  
look not for tomorrow, seek not yesterday, behold the present!

127

To drink wine and consort with a company of the beautiful  
is better than practising the hypocrisy of the zealot;  
if the lover and the drunkard are doomed to hell,  
then no one will see the face of heaven.

128

One cannot consume one's happy heart with sorrow,  
nor consume the pleasure of one's life upon the touchstone;  
no one is to be found who knows what is to be;  
wine, and a loved one, and to repose according to one's desire,  
these things are necessary.

125

O Dervish! rend thy figur'd veil apart,  
Rather than sacrifice to it thy heart!  
Take on thy back the rug of poverty, -  
A Sultan's equal 'neath that rug thou art!

126

Behold the evils Heav'n doth here display,  
The world bereft of friends that pass away;  
Gain for thyself a moment's happiness,  
Nor Past nor Future seek, - behold To-day!

127

'Tis better here with Love and Wine to sit  
Than to become the zealous hypocrite;  
If all who love or drink are doom'd to Hell,  
On whom shall Heaven bestow a benefit?

128

No happy heart with sorrow should consume,  
No joyful life mid test and trial fume;  
None can foretell the future; wine, and love,  
And rest we need, so these let us resume.

129

This heavenly vault, for the sake of my destruction and thine,  
wages war upon my pure soul and thine;  
sit upon the green sward, O my Idol! for it will not be long  
ere that green sward shall grow from my dust and thine.

130

What profits it, our coming and going?  
and where is the woof for the warp of the stuff of our life?  
How many delicate bodies the world  
burns away to dust ! and where is the smoke of them?

131

Flee from the study of all sciences — 'tis better thus,  
and twine thy fingers in the curly locks of a loved one '- 'tis better thus,  
ere that fate shall spill thy blood;  
pour thou the blood of the bottle into the cup '- 'tis better thus,

132

Ah! I have brushed the tavern doorway with my moustaches,  
I have bidden farewell to the good and evil of both worlds;  
though both the worlds should fall like balls in my street,  
seek me, — ye will find me sleeping like a drunkard.

129

The Heavens, that they may destroy us both,  
On our pure souls to war are nothing loth;  
Sit down, my Idol, on the grass, for soon  
My dust and thine shall aid its vernal growth.

130

What profits in our birth, and what our death?  
Where is the Woof our life's frail Warp beneath?  
The World's great fire burns many such to dust;  
Where is the smoke of them within its breath?

131

Flee from all study, and thy fingers twine  
In those soft curls of her thou callest thine;  
Ere Fate shall spill thy blood, hasten to pour  
Into the cup the red blood of the vine.

132

This beard of mine hath brush'd the Tavern door.  
The good and ill of Earth or Heav'n no more  
I seek; though both the worlds should fall apart,  
Here, like a drunkard, will I lie and snore.



133

From everything save wine abstinence is best,  
and that wine is best when served by drunken beauties in a pavilion,  
drinking, and Kalendarism, and erring, are best,  
one draught of wine from Mah to Mahi is best.

134

This heavenly vault is like a bowl, fallen upside down,  
under which all the wise have fallen captive,  
choose thou the manner of friendship of the goblet and the jar,  
they are lip to lip, and blood has fallen between them.

135

See, the skirt of the rose has been torn by the breeze,  
the nightingale rejoices in the beauty of the rose;  
sit in the shade of the rose, for, by the wind, many roses  
have been scattered to earth and have become dust.

136

How long shall I grieve about what I have or have not,  
and whether I shall pass this life light-heartedly or not?  
Fill up the wine.cup, for I do not know  
that I shall breathe out this breath that I am drawing in.

133

To everything save wine deny thy lips;  
And wine is best when Beauty pours and sips;  
Drinking, and Beggary, and Sin are best;  
From Pole to Pole all pleasure these eclipse.

134

This heavenly vault is like a fallen bowl,  
'Neath which the captive wise in sorrow roll;  
Revenge thyself! as do the cup and jar,  
When wine is spilt between them cheek by jowl.

135

The Rose's skirt is tatter'd by the breeze,  
But Nightingales still woo her in the trees;  
Sit in her fragrant bower, for oft the wind  
Hath strewn and turn'd to dust such flowers as these.

136

How long shall I, or poor or wealthy, grieve?  
How long, or sad or merry, shall i live?  
Fill up the bowl! this very breath I draw,  
The winds may ne'er from me again receive.

137

Submit not to the sorrow of this iniquitous world,  
remind us not of sorrow for those who have passed away,  
give thine, heart only to one jasmine-bosomed and fairy-born,  
be not without wine, and cast not thy life to the winds.

138

Though thy life pass sixty years, do not give up;  
wherever thou directest thy steps, walk not save when drunk;  
before they make the hollow of thy skull into a jar,  
lower not the jar from thy shoulder, neither relinquish the cup.

139

One draught of old wine is better than a new kingdom,  
avoid any way save that of wine — 'tis better so;  
the cup is a hundred times better than the kingdom of Feridun,  
the tile that covers the jar is better than the crown of Kai  
Khosru.

140

Those, O Saki, who have gone before us,  
have fallen asleep, O Saki, in the dust of self-esteem;  
go thou and drink wine, and hear the truth from me,  
whatever they have said, O Saki, is but wind.

137

Bear not the sorrow of this world of strife!  
Wake not remembrance, for with Death 'tis rife!  
Love her of fairly birth and glowing breast!  
Drown not in water all the joys of Life!

138

Though sixty years thou countest, scorn to die;  
Where'er thou walkest, to the wine-flask hie;  
Until thy hollow skull be made a bowl,  
Hold fast the jar, nor let the cup go by.

139

Old wine is better than a kingdom new;  
Walk not, save towards the wine of rosy hue.  
The cup is worth a hundred Persian thrones,  
Its cover worth the crown of Kai-Khosrú.

140

O Sáki! they whose soul from them have fled,  
In self-content have bow'd their sleepy head;  
Go thou and drink, but hear the truth from me,  
For 'tis but wind, whatever they have said.

141

Rabbi, thou hast broken my jug of wine;  
Rabbi, thou hast shut upon me the door of happiness;  
thou hast spilled my pure wine upon the earth;  
may I perish ! but thou art strange, O Rabbi!

142

O heaven! thou givest something to every base creature,  
thou suppliest baths, and millstreams, and canals;  
the pure man plays hazard for his night's provisions:  
wouldst thou give a fig for such a heaven?

143

O heart! at the mysterious secret thou arrivest not,  
at the conceits of the ingenious philosophers thou arrivest not;  
make thyself a heaven here with wine and cup,  
for at that place where heaven is, thou mayst arrive, or mayst not.

144

Thou eatest always smoke from the kitchen of the world;  
how long wilt thou suffer miseries concerning what is or is not?  
thou desirest not a stock in trade, for its source weakens,  
and who will consume the capital, seeing that thou consumest all the profit?

141

My wine, O Lord, Thou spillest on the sward,  
On me the door of happiness hast barr'd;  
Thy Hand hath broken my poor jug of wine,  
But, by my life, Thy ways are strange, O Lord!

142

To each base creature, something Thou hast given;  
By Thy cool streams the face of earth is riven;  
The pure man, for a crust, will stake his all:  
Thou should'st give readily, for such, a Heaven.

143

O Heart! the Fount of Truth thou dost not gain,  
To thee Philosophy makes nothing plain;  
Build thyself here a Heaven with wine and cup,  
For thou may'st ne'er another Heaven attain.

144

Creation's smoke seems evermore thy meat,  
How long with sophistry thyself wilt cheat?  
Thou want'st no stock-in-trade to waste away,  
Nor capital. All profits thou dost eat.

145

O soul! if thou canst purify thyself from the dust of the body,  
thou, naked spirit, canst soar in the heavens,  
the Empyrean is thy sphere, — let it be thy shame,  
that thou comest and art a dweller within the confines of earth.

146

I smote the glass wine.cup upon a stone last night,  
my head was turned that I did so base a thing;  
the cup said to me in mystic language,  
"I was like thee, and thou also wilt be like me."

147

Grasp the wine.cup and the flagon, O heart's desire!  
pleasantly, pleasantly, and cheerfully, wander in the garden by the river brink;  
many are the excellent folk whom malicious heaven  
has made a hundred times into cups, and a hundred times into flagons.

148

In a thousand places on the road I walk, Thou placest snares,  
Thou sayest, "I will catch thee if thou placest step in them";  
in no smallest thing is the world independent of Thee,  
Thou orderest all things, and callest me rebellious.

145

O Soul! if thou this dust aside canst fling,  
And soar through space upon unfetter'd wing,  
Infinity thy sphere - count it thy shame  
That to this earth contented thou dost cling.

146

Last night I smote the winecup on a stone;  
For such mad folly how may I atone?  
The shatter'd cup, in mystic language, said,  
"I was like thee, my fate shall be thine own."

147

O Heart's Desire! from cup and flask seek aid;  
Be merry midst the river's flowery glade;  
Malicious Heav'n of many joyous folk  
A hundred times hath cups and flagons made.

148

In every step I take Thou sett'st a snare,  
Saying, "Thus will I entrap thee, so beware!"  
And, while all things are under Thy command,  
That I a rebel am Thou dost declare.

149

I desire a little ruby wine and a book of verses,  
just enough to keep me alive and half a loaf is needful;  
and then, that I and thou, should sit in a desolate place  
is better than the kingdom of a sultan.

150

Do not give way so much to vain grief, — live happily,  
and, in the way of injustice, set thou an example of justice,  
since the final end of this world is nothingness;  
suppose thyself to be nothing, and be free.

151

Gaze as I may on all sides,  
in the garden flows a stream from the river Kausar,  
the desert becomes like heaven, thou mayst say hell has disappeared,  
sit thou then in heaven with one heavenly-faced.

152

Be happy! they settled thy reward yesterday,  
and beyond the reach of all thy longings is yesterday;  
live happily, for without any importunity on thy part yesterday,  
they appointed with certainty what thou wilt do to-morrow, - yesterday!

149

Give me a scroll of verse, a little wine,  
With half a loaf to fill thy needs and mine,  
And with the desert sand our resting place,  
For ne'er a Sultan's kingdom would we pine.

150

Live happily, place not in grief thy trust,  
Amidst injustice show that thou art just;  
If all the world must come to nothingness,  
Be free, and deem thyself already dust.

151

Where'er on earth my wand'ring gaze I place,  
A garden lav'd by Kausar's stream I trace;  
Heaven in the desert, Hell hath disappear'd,  
And Paradise is in her Angel face.

152

Be happy! yesterday thy joy or pain  
Was fix'd, and yesterday may none regain;  
Live happy! for yestr'een, unsought, the Fates  
What thou wilt do to-morrow did ordain.

153

Pour out the red wine of pure tulip colour,  
draw the pure blood from the throat of the jar,  
for today, beside the wine-cup, there is not, for me,  
one friend who possesses a pure heart.

154

To the ear of my heart Heaven whispered secretly :  
"The commands that are decreed thou mayst learn from me:  
had I a hand in my own revolutions,  
wine would have saved me from giddiness."

155

If a loaf of wheaten-bread be forthcoming,  
a gourd of wine, and a thigh.bone of mutton,  
and then, if thou and I be sitting in the wilderness,  
that would be a joy to which no sultan can set bounds.

156

If henceforth two measures of wine come to thy hand,  
drink thou wine in every assembly and congregation,  
for He who made the world does not occupy Himself  
about moustaches like thine, or a beard like mine.

153

Pour out this pure red wine of tulip hue,  
And with the jar's clear blood the cup imbue.  
Beside the wine-cup, there is not to-day  
One friend of mine with heart so warm and true.

154

Heaven in my ear this secret did confess,  
"From me all Fate's decrees thou may'st possess."  
Were mine the hand that made myself revolve,  
I would have sav'd myself much giddiness.

155

Let Fortune but provide me bread of wheat,  
A gourd of wine a bone of mutton sweet,  
Then in the desert if we twain might sit,  
Joys such as ours no Sultan could defeat.

156

Whene'er thy hand may reach two cups of wine,  
Let wine's own light in each assembly shine;  
For He who made the world cares less than naught  
For thy moustaches, or for beards like mine.

157

Had I charge of the matter I would not have come,  
and likewise could I control my going, where should I go?  
were it not better than that, that in this world  
I had neither come, nor gone, nor lived?

158

The month of Ramazan passes and Shawwal comes,  
the season of increase, and joy, and story.tellers comes;  
now comes that time when "Bottles upon the shoulder!"  
they say, — for the porters come and are back to back.

END OF THE QUATRAINS.

Written by the humble slave Mahmud Yerbudaki, who is  
in need of mercies of Eternal God. Finished with victory in  
the district of Shiraz, in the year of the Hijrah, the last decade  
of Safar, Eight hundred and sixty-five.

May God protect him from evils.

157

Had I the power, I ne'er had borne Life's thrall,  
Nor willingly would lie beneath the Pall  
Far better, were it not? if in this world  
I ne'er had come, or gone, or liv'd at all.

158

Ramazán's end draws near, Shawwál doth break,  
The time with flowers and joy to merry-make;  
Now porters with their loads stand back to back  
Laden with wine. - Up, bottles, and awake!